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The many uses of tapes (as a substitute for actual observation) to affect articulation between school and college language programs are outlined. The mechanics of a tape exchange system and its applicability for secondary school teachers, college teachers, teachers of advanced placement courses, and teachers in training are explained. (AF)

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The present editor of the *GQ* retires with this issue. It is kindly requested that all manuscripts and other communications be addressed to the next editor:

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TAPES FOR COORDINATION BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

George A. C. Scherer†

There are many facets to the problem of generating articulation between the language learnings begun in our schools and the continuation of these learnings in our colleges. One of these is the need to develop a communication system by which any institution, secondary or college, can readily keep any other institution informed on what its program is basically like.

Schools and colleges have been attempting to communicate through the journals, the forums staged by professional associations, joint school and college or university conferences, individual discussions face-to-face or through correspondence, programs of class visitation, college catalogs and high school syllabi. But these means of communication have obviously not been working very well, for what the schools know about the college programs and what the colleges know about the school programs is marked by a fabulous amount of ignorance.

The greatest potential for real communication probably lies in a cross-visitation program. No amount of talk about what is being done can produce the true understanding that can be reached by actual observation. Unfortunately, not enough people have the time, or are willing to take the time, to observe the teaching practices of others.

There is one substitute for actual observation that is both feasible and acceptable, and that substitute is tape. The programs that need scrutiny for the sake of better articulation between school and college can be taped in the realistic setting of the classroom at specific intervals throughout the school year. These tapes can then be sent from any school or college to any college or school that asks for them and they can be played at local meetings of language teachers and by individual language teachers. The college tapes can be played for high school students planning to major in a foreign language in college, so as to help them choose suitable colleges or to orient them on those they have already chosen. The high school tapes can be used in the college methodology courses to demonstrate teaching techniques.

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While the schools may have a burning curiosity about the college classes that most of their graduates will enter, this communication via tape should definitely not be a one-way process. The colleges should also exhibit a keen interest in the kinds of products that are about to enter their doors. It is a tragedy to see so many excellent and talented students of language, and potentially of literature, decide to go into some other field of study after a semester or two of college language course work that has no resemblance to the background work they were given in high school. The course designers in the colleges need to be concerned about two things: 1) Is the high school product ready for a given college course? and 2) Is the college course ready for him? The high schools have taken a big load in audiolingual teaching and the colleges now need to catch up.

Most of the mutual interest will be centered upon the intermediate level, and the designers of the intermediate college course could do much to alleviate articulatory difficulties by studying carefully the tapes of second- and third-year high school instruction. They should then reorganize their work to make it compatible with the audiolingual learnings the students bring from high school. This means that placement tests must include tests in speaking and listening as well as in writing and reading, for it is unfair to judge a high school product entirely on the two skills which have received the least emphasis in his training.

The teachers of the third-year college literature courses could bring about smoother articulation at the advanced level by careful study of tapes made in the fourth year of high school. However, this is not such a great problem, for we know that students with four years of high school study behind them usually out-score the four-semester college product on objective achievement tests. These college freshmen, therefore, are not so likely to have difficulty when competing with college juniors in the same class in literature or language as the college freshmen who must make the transition from high school to college at the intermediate level.

Similarly, the high schools are most interested in what happens during the first two or three weeks of the third college semester. For this reason, it might be well to tape a typical 15- to 30-minute segment of instruction during each of the first half-dozen or more meetings of a normal second-year college class. Subsequently, inter-

mittent recordings should suffice to inform the interested parties on methods, on pace and on student progress.

Because the high-school student with three years of language may wish to enter the fourth-semester college class, the colleges could expose the nature of this course by a similar taping process, that is, a tape every day for the first two weeks or so and then intermittent tapes for the rest of the semester. The teacher of the fourth year of high school could also benefit considerably from tapes made in the literature courses in college.

Inasmuch as the Advanced Placement Program is a program of college course work in high school, tapes on teaching could serve a very useful purpose here in both directions. The high school teacher who is teaching an Advanced Placement Program course would have the opportunity to examine college courses reproduced on tape. Not only would this be easier than visiting college courses, but it would permit the observation of many more examples of teaching. The high school teacher could then get his college cohort to react to his teaching by listening to taped samples.

The taped methodological messages between the schools and colleges must, of course, be characterized first of all by a high degree of integrity. Integrity is not necessarily automatically assured. Therefore, it might be suggested that the participating institutions subscribe unanimously to two general principles: 1) The school or college furnishing taped samples of teaching should at the same time establish an open-door policy with respect to personal visitations of any language or literature class by any teacher within the mutual articulation society. 2) The teacher who is making a tape for the exchange program should preface the sample of teaching with some very specific information, recorded while the class is present. An example might be the following: "This is Gerry Kraut recording a normal and unrehearsed discussion session of Borchert's 'Die Küchenuhr' in the tenth week of a third-semester German class at Rocky Mountain University, 1966-1967." Experience would soon indicate what additional prefatory information might be helpful. These two policies should virtually eliminate the exchange of unrepresentative samples of teaching between the schools and colleges.

This proposal is not something that will of necessity involve anyone in a lot of additional work. The originator of a tape simply

has to turn on a tape recorder and teach as he normally would during the same class hour. The receiver of a tape simply has to listen to reality instead of speculating alone or with others on what a language program at a certain high school or college might be like.

It would facilitate matters if a central office in each institution could act as a clearing house for the migrating tapes. The department of audiovisual instruction, which every school and college seems to have, would logically be this agency. On large campuses it would also be a good idea if the language departments had a way of announcing the availability of tapes and making it easy for teachers and students to hear them.

A school or college that becomes a member of the mutual articulation society would not necessarily be obligated to create a new battery of tapes every year. Wherever the materials, methods and teachers do not change substantially from one year to the next, the earlier tapes could be certified as reflecting the current teaching practices of the institution. In such cases, a statement to this effect should be added annually to the tapes so that the listener is reassured.

There are a couple of by-products of this proposed kind of articulation via tape communication that might be mentioned:

First, there is the horizontal potential at all levels. The reluctance on the part of many schools and colleges to make radical changes in their language programs stems from ignorance for the most part. Tape visits to the newer kind of teaching in a similar kind of educational system could do much to reduce reluctance, at least to the point of willingness to engage in partial departmental experimentation.

In a large institution that employs a great many graduate students as teaching assistants, the taping of teaching sessions could effectively serve another important function. It is very difficult for the regular staff members to visit the classes of the teaching assistants as often as he should, but the personal visits of the staff can be supplemented by visits on tape. This is, in fact, already an established practice in the German Department at the University of Colorado. In some ways it is even more effective to confer with a teaching assistant on a taped record of his teaching than it is to hold a post mortem based on a personal visit. The vocal crimes noted by the visitor are often denied by the visited, but not if the evidence comes from a machine.

The implications of this for language departments in the high schools are perhaps obvious enough. For example, a supervisor or a coordinator who ought to visit his colleagues rarely does so because he has not been granted time off in his own teaching schedule for the task. However, if he is the master teacher that a supervisor or coordinator ought to be, he might still be able to offer a great deal of assistance to his colleagues, especially to the inexperienced ones, if he were presented with taped samples of their teaching from time to time.

Since supervisors, department heads and colleagues generally, in high school or college, could readily keep themselves informed about the teaching in their own institutions through the use of tapes of teaching, it is also likely that informal reports to articulating institutions would reflect far more accurately the nature of the language program than is often the case currently. The availability of tapes of teaching across institutions would, of course, in itself promote reasonably objective reporting.

And all of this leads quite naturally to a comment about another intramural by-product of communication between schools and colleges via teaching tapes. The teacher making the tapes, be he an inexperienced beginner or a veteran in high school, be he a lowly teaching assistant or a professor in college, will normally be curious enough to want to listen to himself teach. So he is likely to study his own performance attentively and as a result become wholesomely self-conscious of his own teaching procedures and results. The effect of this self-examination of the objective record of what happened between the two ringings of the bell can hardly be anything but positive.